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MESSAGE DESCRIPTION Replies to Questions for House (Solarz) Hearing on
The Cambodian Resistance

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Room No.

CIA/IO

CIA HQ

Carl Ford, NIO East Asia

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DOD/DIA/DIC

John Sloan, DIO East Asia

695-0257

Pent.

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please
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TO: Carl Ford, NIO, East Asia, CIA HQ 7 E 62
Jay Sloan, DIO East Asia, Pentagon, 2 C 238
FROM: Allen Kitchens, INR/EAP, State 8647 NS
SUBJECT: Replies to Questions for House (Solarz) Hearing on
the Cambodian Resistance

Enclosed are replies prepared by State/INR/EAP for questions
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the EAP Bureau--Lyall Breckon, etc.

resistance forces and supply only the Khmer Rouge? Would any of these countries, but particularly Thailand, prefer that the assistance be covert?

The ASEAN countries have mixed views on US provision of military assistance to the non-communists. Thailand and Singapore have been most consistent in urging more US support because of a desire to see the US more deeply committed to a security role in Southeast Asia and, specifically, the defence of Thailand. At the same time, some in ASEAN see expanded US involvement as a potential "stick" in negotiations with Hanoi. Although other ASEAN states, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia, see US aid as a counter to PRC support for the Khmer Rouge and influence in Thailand, they also express reservations about expanded military efforts. The ASEAN foreign ministers carefully crafted their communique to call for "international support and assistance to the Kampuchean people in their political and military struggle..." thus enabling Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar and Malaysia's Rithauden to disavow reports that the communique called for increased military aid. In the interest of ASEAN solidarity, however, and in lieu of any significant concessions from the Vietnamese towards a political settlement, ASEAN as a whole probably would accept a modest US direct aid program.

China would enthusiastically welcome US military assistance to the non-communist resistance, having long advocated such a move in private. From Beijing's perspective, greater US involvement would provide an important political as well as material lift for the Cambodians and the Thai--at a time when it is badly needed. The Chinese continue to show concern that Sihanouk or other coalition elements might become discouraged with prospects on the battlefield and start to show interest in Vietnamese "peace" overtures.

The three significant ASEAN contributors to the resistance are Singapore (estimated at \$10 million for FY 85), Thailand (\$5 million), and Malaysia (\$2 million). Indonesia has provided only modest humanitarian aid and the Philippines only token support. Brunei has just begun to make a financial contribution. Both Singapore and Malaysia have indicated that continuation of their assistance will be contingent on demonstrated improvement in resistance guerrilla capabilities. ASEAN and China have thus far been able to adequately provide support for the resistance. Thus, the addition of US aid is likely to alter the type and amount of their assistance.

China would nevertheless see political value in keeping its aid flowing. China wants to maintain its influence with all factions and, since early 1984, has sought to galvanize coalition unity and allay suspicions in ASEAN that the PRC ultimately is seeking a KR victory. Hence, Beijing has adopted a more even-handed posture toward the coalition, increasing its aid to the non-communists and publicly treating Sihanouk and San Sonn as equals with the KR leadership.

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China has assured the non-communist resistance that it will match any military aid contribution made to it by other countries. This may well be Beijing's intention, but as a practical matter the PRC will take into consideration the needs of the resistance at any given time. China's own military contribution might be pared back somewhat if other countries were to become involved. Moreover, Beijing could see a moderate reduction on its part as giving the US greater incentive to become involved.

ASEAN views on covert as opposed to overt US aid are also somewhat ambiguous. Some Thai and Singaporean officials apparently want a public display of US support, while others appear concerned that US public involvement might encourage harsher Vietnamese action and promote differences within ASEAN. In any case, Thailand and its backers anticipate that US military aid would soon become public knowledge. Overt US support could place additional strains on ASEAN unity, as Malaysia and Indonesia responded to domestic and international non-aligned sentiments. The Thai public and many government officials would certainly be sensitive about aid that involved the presence of US military personnel on its soil, or large amounts of arms or heavy weapons that could escalate the border fighting or invite further Vietnamese incursions.

Question #8 - What is the state of relations among the three resistance forces? In the past year have there been any reports of Khmer Rouge attacks on KPNLP or ANS forces? What would the likely Khmer Rouge reaction be to the increased provision of military assistance to the noncommunist resistance forces? Might the Khmer Rouge try to take action to prevent an increase in the power of the KPNLP and the ANS?

Leaders and members of the three resistance factions, the Khmer Rouge (KR), the KPNLP, and FUNCINPEC, remain suspicious of each other and the noncommunists' relations with the KR will never be friendly or close. In addition, tensions between the two noncommunist leaders date back to the 1960s, and Son Sann's open denunciations of Sihanouk's cooperation with the KR during the 1970s have on occasion so incensed Sihanouk that he has threatened to leave the coalition altogether.

Working relations within the coalition have improved somewhat in recent months, however, probably due to external pressure from ASEAN and China and because all three factions have had to concentrate on dealing with the more immediate Vietnamese threat. Occasional military clashes between KR and noncommunist forces still occur when the KR feels its dominance in an area might be threatened by an expanding noncommunist presence, but in recent months there have been few reported clashes. Vociferous noncommunist and Thai complaints about such attacks, both to the KR and to its Chinese supporters,

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SECRET/NOFORN

HOUSE (SOLARZ) HEARING ON CAMBODIAN RESISTANCE

Question #2 - What is the explanation for the outcome of the most recent Vietnamese dry season offensive? Has there been a change in Vietnam's strategy or more efficient implementation of a constant strategy? What is the Vietnamese military goal in Cambodia, a military victory or a satisfactory political settlement?

The purpose of Vietnam's dry season offensive, prepared with considerable care for over a year, has been to wipe out the Khmer resistance bases in Cambodia and to seal the Thai-Cambodian border to the greatest extent possible. The Vietnamese are seeking to cripple the resistance forces, halt their military operations in the interior and undermine their political appeal there. We do not believe that the campaign represents a change in Vietnam's general strategy which has been to employ the military means necessary to curb the resistance and provide a secure environment in which to build a viable, responsive Khmer regime. Increasing resistance activity in the interior in 1983 and early 1984 and the aura of insecurity it produced in Vietnamese-controlled territory, however, evidently was the immediate impetus for stronger action.

Although not the primary motive for the offensive, the Vietnamese also want to demonstrate internationally that the resistance is a "paper tiger" and that Thai and Chinese policy toward Cambodia is therefore bankrupt. Hanoi hopes to encourage doubts in ASEAN about the efficacy of continuing to follow Thailand's (and by extension, China's) refusal to accommodate Vietnam's objectives in Cambodia. Hanoi would like to engage in negotiations for a political settlement but only on its own terms: the elimination of the Khmer Rouge and recognition of Vietnam's client regime. In this regard, Hanoi has been signalling readiness to see Sihanouk and Son Sann play some role in that government, but it is doubtful that the Vietnamese would agree to a genuine, balanced coalition. Furthermore, we see little likelihood that in the foreseeable future Hanoi would agree to a complete withdrawal of PAVN forces before being assured of Phnom Penh's stability and responsiveness to Vietnamese direction on major issues, regardless of its promise of withdrawal "paired with" the elimination of the Khmer Rouge.

Question #6 - Would China and the ASEAN countries welcome US provision of military assistance to the non-communist resistance forces? Would they be inclined to reduce what assistance they are providing or keep it at current levels? Would China end its military assistance to the non-communist

along with a demonstrated noncommunist willingness to fight back, appear also to have been effective in reducing the attacks.

The increased provision of aid to the noncommunists would not of itself prompt KR retaliatory action against them. A surge in noncommunist strength and activity inside Cambodia, by no means a certainty even with US aid, probably would lead to an increase in clashes with the KR, particularly in areas in the interior, which the KR considers its territory

Question #9 - How firm is Prince Sihanouk's dedication to the resistance? Was he contemplating a deal with the Heng Samrin regime in the latter part of 1984? Are there circumstances under which he would seek an accomodation with that regime? What effect would the provision of American military assistance to the ANS have on the Prince's dedication to the anti-Vietnamese struggle?

The Prince, although as unpredictable as ever, appears firmly dedicated to what he perceives to be the welfare of Cambodia, including of course, a firm conviction that he himself is the key to a solution in Cambodia. He is committed to resisting Vietnam's takeover of Cambodia and will do his best to regain and preserve the independence of his country.

His commitment to the resistance coalition itself is less firm, however, although he believes that at present the coalition is the most likely way to reduce Vietnamese control in Cambodia. His dedication to the coalition is dependent on his perception that it will produce pressure on Hanoi to seek a settlement. If, as time wears on, Sihanouk becomes convinced that his only hope of influencing Cambodia's future lies in reaching an accomodation with Vietnam and its clients in Phnom Penh, he might choose that option. Unless convinced he would have some real authority, however, he would more likely retire from the coalition and in exile and await developments.

Increased assistance to the ANS, to the extent that it increased ANS military effectiveness and improved resistance prospects would presumably increase the firmness of his commitment. Sihanouk has traditionally been jealous of his non-aligned credentials, however, and he might well take pains to minimize the appearance of taking aid from the US.

Sihanouk believes that all parties should meet to negotiate a solution on Cambodia, a belief shared by ASEAN and agreed to by China, and he has frequently called for a Cambodian "government of national reconciliation" to include all four Cambodian groups--the three resistance factions and Heng Samrin's PRK. It was probably in that vein that he expressed an interest in meeting with PRK Foreign Minister Hun Sen when both were in Paris last December. We have no evidence that he

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was contemplating splitting with the coalition or intended to reach an accomodation with the Vietnam. When told by the KR and China that they would not support such a meeting, he announced that in the interest of preserving unity within the coalition he would not do so.